

19 December 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Visit to Aluminum Smelting Operations

1. At the request of the Deputy Chief, Safety Branch, the undersigned visited both the Bladensburg Metal Company, 3401 Kenilworth Avenue, Bladensburg and the Tomke Aluminum Company, Inc., 4201-4301 East Monument Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21205 to determine the security environment of destroying sensitive and highly classified aluminum plates.

2. The Bladensburg operation has been going on for many years. Approximately every four to five weeks the Printing Services Division, OL, accumulates between 1,700 and 2,000 pounds of aluminum plates containing information classified up to and including TKH, other codeword and Top Secret. A Logistics double-axle truck with a driver and another member of PSD proceed with the load from the PSD building, Headquarters, via 495 to Bladensburg Metal Company. The truck usually arrives around 9:30 and the truck is backed into an unloading dock where six heavy-duty metal boxes, approximately four feet by two feet by three feet, with casters are rolled into the smelting room. The contents which are 20 gauge aluminum lithographic sheets folded four times over to hide the writing are placed into a 2,000 pound capacity melting pot idling at 1650 degrees. Approximately two of the six boxes are unloaded and stacked on top of each other to above the rim of the melting pot. The doors on the housing of the furnace are closed and the furnace operator and the CIA representatives wait in the

vicinity until approximately 11:30 before melting of the sheets actually begins. According to information given to the undersigned, HSB/PhySD provides security escort who were instructed to remain at the operation until all sheets were melted. The CIA truck driver, who has been making this run for 15 years, related that two or three years ago the HSB escorts began leaving at about 12:30 after looking into the caldron at the slowly descending stack of plates and deciding that the more sensitive material had been melted. With the HSB security escort leaving before all plates are melted creates an untenable situation in those instances when the furnace breaks down half-filled with unmelted plates. This situation may last for many hours before it is corrected. Present situation leaves the two Logistics men with the security responsibility for the highly sensitive plates. It is recommended that the security escorts remain until all sheets are melted. One further potential security problem is the possibility of the hot caldron blowing up, which it has done once in the last three years, and scattering bits of unmelted and readable aluminum all over the plant.

3. With the exception of the above, the security of the melting operation is adequate.

4. [ ] and I went to the Tomke Aluminum Company, a Division of United Iron and Metal Company, Inc., 4201-4301 East Monument Street, Baltimore, 21205 (telephone PE2-2200) to evaluate the aluminum smelting operations in terms of CIA's needs. We talked with Mr. Peter Darby, Director of Administration and the plant manager after viewing the foundry and smelting operations. Unquestionably the Tomke Aluminum Company facilities are larger and more efficient. In comparison, the Bladensburg plant uses a 2,000 pound capacity caldron heated primarily at the bottom for a slow heat increase while the Tomke Company has 2,500 pound smelting furnaces with troughs heated on all sides to 1,650 degrees Fahrenheit and large enough to accept our entire load at one time. The Tomke furnaces are never banked with the exception of worker strike situations, thus providing hot and charged furnaces the moment a load arrives. Bladensburg shuts down the furnaces

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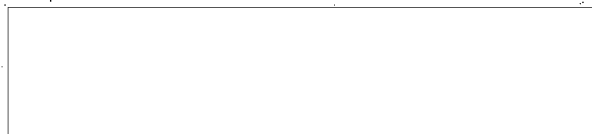
after each load of aluminum unless another job becomes available. According to the plant manager and Mr. Darby, only one occasion occurred in the past three years where the 2,500 pound furnace was out of commission because of a crack in the outer housing. Therefore, we can expect no furnace down times with Tomke eliminating the need for a security standby while the furnace is being repaired. One further advantage to the Tomke operation is that our truck can be driven into the foundry and parked within 15 feet of the furnace for quick off-loading with a short line-of-sight.

5. As a matter of note, the Bladensburg Metal Company charges the Agency nothing for use of the furnace and reimburses us at a rate of seven cents a pound of ingot aluminum. Conversely, the Tomke Aluminum Company, smelting operation is predicated upon a critical quality control to assure producing high grade aluminum shot and ingots. To assure the high quality of the end product, the furnaces are cleaned and purged after each batch is processed. According to the plant manager, lithographic plates vary widely in aluminum quality and are processed separately requiring a cleaning and purging of the furnace. This increases the cost of furnace operation. When costs and remunerations were discussed, we were given the same price package given to the National Security Agency who destroys lithographic plates at the plant by the tractor-trailer load. The price package amounts to \$88 an hour for use of the furnace with a minimum of two hours and no reimbursement for the aluminum recovered by the Tomke Company. The quality of the recovered aluminum is such that resale value is minimal.

6. The distance from the Printing Services Division building at Headquarters to the Bladensburg operation is approximately 27 miles one way while the distance to the Tomke Company in Baltimore is

50 miles one way. One of the advantages of using Tomke Company over Bladensburg Company is the reduction of man power needed from three men for a minimum of an eight hour day to two men for a maximum three hour day.

7. Evaluating both melting operations from a security standpoint, it is the opinion of the undersigned that because of the explosion possibility of scattering unmelted plates and the furnace breakdown at Bladensburg, the Tomke Aluminum Company would be a more secure operation.



Chief, Domestic Security Branch

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